

Bill Dunbar

08/19/2004 09:12 AM

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CC:

Subject: Bellevue PCBs stories

i can't find the stories that KOMO and Q13 did

Toxins force closure of Bellevue child care center

06:29 PM PDT on Wednesday, August 18, 2004

By GARY CHITTIM / KING 5 News



BELLEVUE, Wash. - The parents of more than 100 children are searching for new daycare facilities after dangerous toxins forced the closure of the Surreydowns Children's Center in Bellevue, Wash.

Parents were told Tuesday that the old building was closed after inspectors found leaking light fixtures and stained carpets.

"Preliminary tests indicate there are indeed PCBs in leaking light ballasts and the one sample we had of carpet also came back positive for PCBs," said Bill Dunbar of the Environmental Protection Agency.

"The most important action to take once you suspect someone has been exposed to PCBs is to prevent further exposure," said environmental health scientist Karen Larson.

KING
The child care center is owned by King County, which says clean-up is up to the renter.

Resources

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PCBs FAQs

So the state Department of Social and Health Services shut down the school and ordered an immediate cleanup.

PCBs, which were banned in the 70s but are commonly found in fluorescent light fixtures in old buildings.

The child care director said they were working on cleaning up and were consulting the building owner, which just happens to be King County.

"We don't think there has been any exposure that would cause any health affect in a child but we wanted to make sure that didn't happen and there was enough uncertainty around where the material might have spread that it's just better to get those kids out," said King County Health Director Alonzo Plough.

The county supported the shut down of its own building but said it is not responsible for the cleanup. A spokesperson said that belongs to the renter, the operators of Surreydowns Children's Center.

Stuck in the middle of all this are dozens of parents worried about what their children may have been expose to and where they will go for alternate child care.

The center may be closed for some time and finding new daycare may prove challenging. Other daycare facilities in the area are helping operators of the closed center by making room for some of the children.

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Day care closed after PCBs found - Investigation finds chemicals in fluorescent light fixtures

2004-08-19

by David A. Grant
Journal Reporter

BELLEVUE -- A Bellevue day-care center was shut down Tuesday after hazardous chemicals were discovered oozing from aging fluorescent light fixtures in the building.

The state Department of Social and Health Services temporarily suspended the license of Surreydowns Children's Center after an investigation by Public Health - Seattle & King County and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Surreydowns Children's Center is at 609 112th Ave. S.E., in an office building that was built in 1960 and is owned by King County, according to records of the county assessor's office.

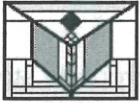
Preliminary results showed the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs as they are commonly known on light fixtures at the day care.

Though the manufacture of PCBs was banned 27 years ago, the light fixtures at the day care apparently were made before the ban, said Bill Dunbar, a spokesman for the Seattle office of the EPA.

He said such incidents could become more frequent in the future as fixtures that were never replaced continue to age and deteriorate.

PCBs, banned in 1977, are a mix of individual chemicals that are still found in the environment because they do not biodegrade. They were widely used as coolants and lubricants in transformers, capacitors, and electrical equipment because they don't burn easily and are good insulators, according to the EPA.

Health effects that have been associated with PCBs include neurobehavioral and immunological changes in children, rashes and liver damage. They are known to cause cancer in animals.



Bill Dunbar

08/20/2004 12:46 PM

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cc:

Subject: t.v. story on Surrey Downs

Officials act after toxins close child care center

12:07 PM PDT on Friday, August 20, 2004

By GARY CHITTIM / KING 5 News



The child care center is owned by King County, which says clean-up is up to the renter.

KING

BELLEVUE, Wash. - The discovery of toxic chemicals in a Bellevue child-care center Wednesday led to new actions by Thursday, including the temporary closure of a county court building. Although King County owns the building, the woman who rents the space where the problem was discovered is responsible for maintenance of the building, and therefore cleanup, according King County spokeswoman Elaine Kraft.

That doesn't mean the county is off the hook for the cost.

"We're just waiting to see what she's going to do," Kraft said.

On Wednesday, KING 5 reported that dangerous PCBs had turned up in initial tests of some light fixtures and carpet in the popular Surreydowns Children's Center.

It now turns out the problem may be worse than expected and King County may be on the hook for at least part of the clean up cost.

Workers removed and inspected light fixtures Thursday at the

Bellevue District Court building. They shut this building down after finding similar fixtures to those that prompted the closure of an adjacent Child Care Facility.

Photos provided by a former employee of Surrey Downs Child Care facility show dark liquid leaking from light fixtures at the center. Preliminary tests show the liquid and carpet below contain the dangerous toxins PCBs - polychlorinated biphenyls.

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State officials immediately shut down the center and Tuesday night and distributed notices to parents of the more than 100 children who attend the center.

County health officials assured parents that there was very little risk of any children suffering health affects from exposure to the PCBs.

But State DSHS documents released Thursday show the center has more problems:

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Toxins force closure of Bellevue child care center

In addition to the light fixtures with a liquid like brown substance with the environmental hazard associated

with PCBs.

Inspectors found visible mold growth throughout the facility rooms, medications were not properly stored, and workers reported they had not been trained regarding medications management, policies and procedures. Based on these problems and to prevent further exposure, the center is closed and King County officials, citing provisions in their lease, ordered the daycare operator to clean it up.

However on Thursday federal officials informed the county that it, too, may be responsible for the possibly very expensive cleanup.

"The law, for a variety of reasons, never distinguishes between the owner or the operator of a facility," said EPA spokesman Bill Dunbar. "It doesn't necessarily recognize contracts, in this case a lease, between the county and the daycare."

That law is designed to prevent any property owner from evading its environmental responsibilities through leases or even selling the building.

Until this is worked out, the Surreydowns Child Care Center will remain closed and parents of the some 100 children who attend there will have to find somewhere else to take them.

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Bill Dunbar
Public Affairs Specialist
EPA Region 10
206/553-1203

PCB Chronology

20 Aug 2004 (Rev1)

Current Actions/Summary:

EPA Notification:

EPA was Notified by King County Health Officer: Tracy Mayfield (206) 296-3928 on July 14, 2004. He had visited a day care and there were potential leaking PCB light ballasts. The day care was Surreydowns Children's Center, 609 112th Ave S.E., Bellevue, Washington, 98004 (425) 453-9839. Directors are Debbie Coburn and Linda Young. This was referred to OEA by the PCB Program the same day received as a citizen's complaint. Concern by the NW Region Washington State Licensing over renewing the Day Care license: Marge Sorlie (206) 721-6940. The Day Care operates in the facility leased from the King County for the past twenty-three (23 sic) years.

OCE PCB Program received a response from OEA on July 29, 2004. An inspector to be assigned. On August 3, 2004 Response from OEA Dr. Michael Watson: Contacted by Frances Limtiaco (425) 649-7159 Child Care Specialist w/DSHS. Additional concerns of friable asbestos, plumbing lead solder and flourescent light ballasts.

EPA Inspection & Sampling:

On August 6, 2004 there was a response from EPA Region 10 OEA. Inspector with six (6) samples taken at the day care. Samples submitted to the Manchester Laboratory for analysis.

On August 10, 2004 Inspector & Enforcement Officer to Day Care. Sampling on the evening of August 10, 2004. 19 Samples taken and sumbitted to Manchester Laboratory. Day care has 130 children (8 months to 10 years old). Facility is 1950's school that has been leased to the Day Care Operation for some twenty-three or so years.

Preliminary Sample Analyses:

The PCB sample analyses continued on August 11, 2004 at EPA's Manchester Laboratory. On August 13, 2004 Preliminary Results of analyses 1% to 75% PCB (1,000 ppm to 750,00 ppm). Aroclor 1254. Leaking PCB ballasts. One wipe sample from a carpet stain taken. Manchester Laboratory analysis continued with column dilution. Additional Column calibration and cleaning required due to high dilution for PCB analyses.

On August 16, 2004 the PCB Program contacted Steve Riemer: Manchester Laboratory (360) 871-8719. Analyses to be completed & QA/QCd by Thursday, August 19, 2004. Additional analyses show Aroclors 1016, 1254 & 1260. This indicates that there was more than one type of PCB flourescent light ballast. PCB Program contacted Tracy Mayfield: awaiting return call.

On August 16, 2004 the PCB Program, OCE met with the Director, OCE. An August 17, 2004 meeting scheduled for 2:00 pm with King County Real Estate Office.

On August 19, 2004 the PCB Program met with the OCE Director to update the situation. The County had shut down the adjacent Court House and was removing the light ballasts.

On August 19, 2004 the SCS Engineers submitted a draft PCB Remediation Plan to EPA Region 10 for review. A draft approval letter was prepared on August 20, 2004. This approval letter will be sent to the County and to the Surrydowns operator as soon as the Final PCB Remediation Plan is received.

On August 19 & 20, 2004 the PCB Program endeavored to contact the King County Facility Services Division. There was no reply from Tim Clancy after repeated messages were left.

On August 20, 2004 the Manchester Lab was contacted concerning the PCB samples. There was no additional analysis conducted on August 20, 2004. There needs to be additional emphasis on the QA/QCd samples. The PCB Program was informed by a parent that the Day Care has shut down permanently and will not reopen.